

March 5, 2010

To: Envision San José 2040 Task Force
From: John Baty, Planning
Subject: Notes from a Conversation with Dick Santos

Dear Envision San José 2040 Task Force Members:

Dick Santos will not be attending Task Force meeting #35 on March 8th as he will be fulfilling other duties that same evening at the Berryessa Citizens Advisory Council meeting. In his absence Dick requested that the Task Force be provided with a copy of the following notes from a conversation we had on Wednesday, March 3rd.

Jobs

- The City should be planning for jobs first.
- The buffer lands in Alviso should be preserved and promoted as agricultural land until needed for future jobs. The buffer lands in Alviso can provide the flexibility to accommodate the types of jobs that can't easily be accommodated elsewhere in San José. Buffer lands should also be preserved for expansion of the recycled water program (including possibly desalination). The buffer lands should not be used for retail or residential, because these types of uses can put pressure and limitations on the types of employment lands that can be developed elsewhere in the buffer lands.

City Business Practices

- The City needs to review current permit processes to ensure that they are not discouraging business/property owners from obtaining permits. To streamline processes, the City should ensure projects meet primary life/safety requirements and other major objectives the City is trying to accomplish and not focus on minor details. The City needs skilled and well trained staff that is able to provide people with alternative ways to comply with codes and policies.
- The City should take a leadership role in providing incentives (e.g., rebates, reduced fees) for doing good things like conserving water by retrofitting existing development or replacing lawns with drought tolerant landscaping.

Parks

- The City should encourage more small parks throughout the City. Neighborhoods that surround smaller parks have a greater sense of ownership of those parks and are more likely to look after them (community policing, maintaining).
- The City is lacking parks for softball play. Parks with softball fields should be designed to protect adjacent properties.

Waterways

- Partnering with the Water District to enhance major waterways and the Alviso marina should be a major component of the City's vision.
- The City should encourage businesses to locate along, and bring attention to our waterways and marina.
- More development and activity along the waterways discourages undesirable activities in those areas.
- The City's waterways and marina should be thought of as monuments that contribute positively to the economy, environment, and image of San José.

Current Plans

- The City's existing plans (e.g., Alviso Mater Plan) should be honored. If the plans need to be revisited, need to re-engage the community.

Communications with Task Force

- Use plain English at meetings, reduce use of lingo.
- There should be better communication with Task Force members about expectations and role at meetings, including community meetings/workshops.